

DELTA CHI

BRIEF

Is your chapter membership uncertain as to which direction it should be heading? Do members complain about a lack of group accomplishment and/or motivation? Is membership participation decreasing? If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, then it’s probably time for a retreat.

There are countless benefits to having a retreat. Some of the benefits include:

- The opportunity for your chapter to set new goals.
- Time to get away from the campus for re-evaluation and reflection.
- The strengthening of chapter unity.
- A time for positive thinking, not a “gripe session.”
- A review of responsibilities, individual obligations and the chapter’s potential.
- The opportunity to re-acquaint a chapter with its basic purposes and objectives and renew its dedication to the founding principles of Delta Chi.
- An opportunity to establish an atmosphere in the chapter for creative thinking and new ideas.
- Improved spirit, leadership and motivation.
- Increased involvement of all members in decision making and overall planning.
- The opportunity to have a good time.

The philosophy of the *Chapter Retreat BRIEF* is to set goals together and set them high. Then work as a team, with a plan, to achieve those goals. Evaluate the results in writing, and integrate this feedback into the program so the next time it will be even better. Let’s examine this philosophy more closely by reviewing each element separately:

A. Set Goals Together: One of the most common management misconceptions is related to the responsibilities of leadership. Chapter officers often think it is *their* responsibility to decide where the group needs to go, and then work to get it there. In fact, the entire membership should determine the direction of the group, and the officers should then help keep the chapter “on course” to achieve the goals set by the membership. “People tend to support that which they help create.” With this in mind, it’s important to note that collective goal-setting, or goal-setting that involves the

entire chapter (and preferably alumni), is key in determining whether a chapter will reach its goals.

B. Set reasonable goals: When goals are set, all chapter planning and activities should revolve around these goals. Ambitious goals result in ambitious achievements. For this reason, it is essential for the chapter to set goals that are reasonable and achievable. (Be wary not to set unreasonably high goals, as failure to obtain a goal can have negative effects). In fact, a series of small “successes” is better than one big failure. (Depending on the situation, it might be better to strive for a most improved award than it would be to strive for the President’s Cup). If your chapter has not had a winning attitude for some time, you should develop goals for a series of small successes that can help the group rebuild its psychology of winning.

C. Work as a Team: Chapter leaders should work to include all members in the day-to-day function of achieving goals and should reinforce the team concept by publicly applauding accomplishments that demonstrate quality teamwork. Remember, when trying to develop a winning attitude, one man’s efforts, no matter how successful, will fail to help the chapter learn winning habits in the long run.

D. Develop a Plan of Action: The word “plan” refers to an organized, publicly displayed schedule for goal achievement, complete with detailed objectives and names of individuals responsible for seeing that the objectives are reached. This serves as a visible “road map” for the chapter.

Incidentally, the lack of a plan, or the lack of adherence to a plan, is where some chapters fall short. A key element of goal achievement is the need to keep focus and direction on the daily operations of the chapter. A plan will help a chapter do this. The plan should always be kept at the forefront of chapter activities and should keep the chapter continuously moving toward its goals.

E. Evaluate the Results in Writing: Following through is important to providing consistency to chapter programming. A key element of follow-through is recording progress and evaluating programs in writing. Docu-

mentation of this kind will prevent the chapter from continuously “reinventing the wheel.” A retreat, however, is only the beginning. The success or failure of a retreat depends on what happens following the retreat. Programs must be adequately recorded in order to affect lasting, meaningful change..

F. Officer Retreats: Some chapter leaders often think an officer retreat should come before a chapter retreat. In fact, the opposite is more useful. One of the main functions of a retreat is to set goals together. Therefore, it is logical to hold the officer retreat **after** the chapter retreat. At an officer retreat, the leaders can determine how to best guide the group towards the goals set during the chapter retreat. A chapter retreat sets the goals, and an officer retreat determines how to allocate the resources to achieve those goals.

Finally, probably the most important reason to have regular retreats is to ensure that your chapter is meeting the needs of its members. Delta Chi exists for its members – it’s not the other way around. If we want to keep our members involved and excited about Delta Chi, then we have to make sure that they are getting everything from their membership that they need and want. You will not know that unless you assemble your men and ask them!

SECTION I

MEETING YOUR MEMBERS' NEEDS

Fraternities provide services to college men. These services include providing programs aimed at meeting the needs of the membership. Men approach fraternities desiring academic assistance, an improved social life, intramural sports, a sense of belonging, leadership experience and much more. When a chapter does not provide a diverse set of programs to meet these diverse needs, members often lose interest and look elsewhere to have these needs met. If this happens, it is, in fact, the chapter that has failed the membership. If this is the case, you will start to hear such words as “apathy”, “deadwood”, “inactive”, “motivation problem” and “senioritis”. But remember, people are always motivated by the probability of having their needs fulfilled. The questions are:

1. What are those needs?
2. How can Delta Chi best fulfill those needs?

Your chapter must design programs to meet the members' needs in order to keep them interested and motivated. How well does your chapter meet the needs of its members?

WHAT DOES YOUR CHAPTER PROVIDE

An interesting exercise to give the chapter prior to a chapter retreat (preferably one to two weeks before the retreat) is a “Needs Assessment,” (see **Appendix A** for a sample). This activity points out what the brothers think of the chapter's programs. Have the members complete this questionnaire during a chapter meeting prior to the retreat (both brothers and associate members should complete it). Ask them to put down two to three answers in order of popularity. For example, the answers to question number one might reveal that 12 members like to play basketball, ten like video games, eight members enjoy camping, etc.

At the opening session of the retreat, develop a list of what the chapter is currently doing (i.e., what types of activities are offered and what benefits does membership provide). Then hand out a summary of the “Needs Assessment.”

The degree to which the two lists do not correlate indicates a failure of the chapter in its role of addressing the needs of its members. This is what you have been referring to when you say, “We have a motivation problem,” or “Our members are apathetic.” Often, apathy and motivation problems are blamed on members when, instead, it has been inadequate chapter programming that is the culprit. Where the summary listing of what members enjoy deviates from what the chapter is currently offering indicates which areas the chapter needs to further develop.

Additional questions may be added to this list. The benefit of these questions is that they act as “food for thought” for the retreat. Members will think about their interests and needs and will come to the chapter retreat with ideas for programs to meet those needs.

PROMOTING THE RETREAT

The officers are your promoters and the first resource people. Once they understand what a retreat can do for the chapter and how it will help them in the offices they hold, you should find them willing to convince the chapter to organize and participate in retreats.

To say, “Let's have a retreat...” or “Next Saturday the officers have decided to hold a retreat” is not sufficient preparation for a successful program. Prepare your members for the idea of a retreat by discussing it informally before presenting it at a chapter meeting. This way you have a chance to gain a favorable response from the members.

Publicize and encourage your members to attend with teasers at meetings and bulletin board ads, and distribute brochures on the activities available at the retreat site. You could also have a couple of members prepare skits or “commercials” to be presented at meetings. It can also be helpful to have door prizes of t-shirts and other Delta Chi paraphernalia.

Do not fine members for not attending. Remember, we want them there because they want to be there. Do not force anyone. If some members do not show up, then it's their loss. They have lost the right and privilege to participate in a major decision-making process. As long as a majority of the members are in attendance, then you can make decisions for the entire chapter.

SECTION II: ORGANIZING THE RETREAT

TIME AND DURATION

Set the date for the retreat as far in advance as possible. This gives the members ample time to make arrangements to attend. The dates should not conflict with major school events, such as football games or exams. A good turnout is more likely if the retreat dates coincide with a quiet weekend. One point to keep in mind when choosing a date is that the programming designed and motivation inspired need to be implemented and reinforced immediately after the retreat. Therefore, it is not recommended that a retreat be held the weekend after finals week and/or before a major break (i.e., summer, winter or spring break).

The length of the retreat depends on three factors:

1. The amount of material to be covered.
2. The amount of time available.
3. The willingness of the members to devote the time.

The first two can be controlled, but the third depends entirely on your ability to organize the retreat and motivate the members to participate enthusiastically. Again, it's better to have a small success rather than a big failure. Limit your efforts to making meaningful and lasting change that the chapter can assimilate in one or two key areas, rather than trying to change everything at once and accomplishing nothing in the end.

Successful retreats can range in length from a few hours to a full weekend. While longer retreats provide the time necessary to play as well as work, shorter retreats can still be very effective. Some suggestions for "play" are provided in **Section V**. The "male bonding" capabilities of a full weekend retreat should not be overlooked, as this is a major contributor to improved motivation.

If the retreat is going to just last a few hours, it is obviously not necessary to make arrangements for recreational facilities, sleeping accommodations and meals. However, it is a good idea to have refreshments available. *There should not be any alcohol consumed during the day, and preferably there should be no alcohol at the retreat at all. Your challenges may be deeper than a retreat will be able to facilitate if your members are unable to go one day without alcohol.*

SUGGESTED RETREAT DATES

The following are suggested times of the year when a retreat could be held:

Fall Semester

1. Orientation week
2. Immediately following Thanksgiving
3. Away football game weekend

Spring Semester

1. Following winter break
2. Prior to spring rush
3. Following spring break
4. Prior to fall rush

LOCATION

If possible, all retreats should be held away from the chapter house. The reasons for this are many:

- A. Distractions:** Phone calls, friends/girlfriends dropping in, television, stereos, non-participants walking around, etc. All of these detract from a concentrated effort by those present.
- B. Unifying Spirit:** This results from the foreign environment with the only familiar objects being the members themselves.
- C. Greater Creativity:** This is in line with the principle used in business that states that productivity is increased when positive changes in the working environment are implemented.
- D. Sense of Commitment:** The psychology of making the effort to get to the location builds a sense of commitment. At the house, it takes no effort to go downstairs and plop on the floor, and it's just too easy to go back to your room when things aren't going "your way."

Facilities that have been successfully used in the past include a lodge or farm in the country, a campground, a local hotel/motel conference room or the home of a cooperative alumnus. The size, comfort and number of the rooms available should be considered when choosing a location, as should the presence of an adequate number of tables and chairs. *No one* should be allowed to sit or lie on the floor or a couch.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Obviously, those who attend the retreat will receive the greatest benefit. Therefore, a large attendance will increase the retreat's effectiveness. However, do not make attendance mandatory. Mandating attendance *forces* people to show up. When members are there because they have to be, and not because they want to be, their attitudes and participation usually take on a negative tone. A retreat is no place for negativism. The members who attend on their own will be interested and willing to devote the time to the subject at hand. If that is the case, more will be accomplished. It is the job of those who do attend to communicate the details of the retreat to those who were not there. As the positive results of the retreat become obvious, chances are that future retreats will meet with greater attendance.

Bringing dates/girlfriends should be prohibited. The retreat is a time for serious, concentrated work and for increasing the Bond. Women do not fit into the scheme of a retreat.

WHO SHOULD LEAD THE RETREAT?

THE RETREAT FACILITATOR SHOULD NOT BE A STUDENT MEMBER OF THE CHAPTER. In fact, it probably should not be anyone who is directly connected to the chapter. Go the extra distance, and select an unbiased person from outside the chapter. The success of your retreat greatly depends on the person you choose to be the facilitator. The facilitator's job is to see that the retreat flows in an orderly manner. He/she should avoid the common tendency to offer opinions on issues he/she feels is important. The chapter membership, as a whole, must set its own direction (what is to be discussed), goals and objectives. If the facilitator tries to dominate the direction of the retreat, it will lose its worth as a concerted effort of the group.

It is important to choose a person who is able to facilitate the needs of the chapter and not necessarily a person with the most impressive title. Some suggestions for a "qualified" facilitator are: a Fraternity staff member (past or present), a credible alumnus, university staff/faculty member, Greek Advisor, a qualified advisor of another fraternity or sorority, or a qualified parent or local professional.

RETREAT CHECKLIST

- ✓ Date set.
- ✓ Location reserved.
- ✓ All members notified of time and place.
- ✓ Outside guests invited and role explained.
- ✓ Transportation arranged, if needed.
- ✓ Sleeping facilities arranged, if needed.
- ✓ Meals arranged.
- ✓ Refreshments available.
- ✓ Recreation facilities available.
- ✓ Public address equipment available.
- ✓ Sufficient paper and pencils for all.
- ✓ Copies of retreat agenda for all.
- ✓ Blackboard or flip chart (and tape) available.
- ✓ Chalk, erasers and magic markers available.
- ✓ Tape player and Delta Chi music tape.

SECTION III: FORMAT

The format that the activities are to follow is the focal point of a retreat. No part of a retreat should be allowed to turn into a “gripe session.” Be constructive and keep to the business at hand. You should have a good idea as to what topics are to be covered from looking at the results of the “Needs Assessment” you will have completed prior to the retreat. All retreat activities should center around the format discussed in this section. This format is a proven design for chapters to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short amount of time. It allows for setting goals and objectives as a group, exercising teamwork and gathering input from everyone present.

A list of topics to discuss can be developed prior to the retreat, as mentioned above, or you can develop a list by brainstorming and having the members develop a list of topics they wish to work on.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a stream-of-consciousness technique in which creative thinking, rather than practical thinking, is encouraged. It’s easy – just ask the participants what they want to talk about or what challenges they believe the chapter is facing. Are there any programs they want to see improved (e.g., recruitment, membership education, alumni relations)? Participants spontaneously suggest ideas – any ideas – on a topic, the facilitator writes the ideas on a chalkboard or flip chart, and then the participants edit the list of ideas. The atmosphere must be comfortable enough for the participants to be uninhibited about presenting ideas. It should be made explicitly clear at the beginning of the brainstorming session that there are no “dumb” or “bad” ideas. All ideas should be written down at first. Their appropriateness will be evaluated when you edit the list.

At this point, all that should have been developed is a list of topics, not action plans. Those will be developed with the “ratchet system.”

THE RATCHET SYSTEM

Whether your chapter is addressing a single subject, five or six topics or the unique issue of motivation, you need to utilize a “ratchet system.” This is a term used to refer to a system of rotation during the retreat in which everyone’s input is used to develop a suitable program designed to meet his own needs. Remember, the important aspect is the process you use to get where you want to be, not the content. Furthermore, it is imperative that you develop a list of topics before you begin. The ratchet system provides the process by which the chapter takes a topic, develops programming for it and builds the support of the membership for the new programming.

First, the list developed by the brainstorming process should be prioritized by taking a straw poll of everyone’s top five topics. Since there is not unlimited time to necessarily discuss everything, you need to decide what the most important topics are to ensure that at least they are discussed.

The retreat facilitator should then divide the assembled members into sub-groups of no more than six men and no less than four. Each sub-group should preferably sit at a circular table to increase the productivity of the group. Proper arrangement of the room and the seating is essential to the success of your retreat when following this format.

The ratchet system is designed to build commitment to a group-developed set of goals. The only way to do that is to make sure every member of the group has his opinions on each topic represented. The problem most frequently encountered is insufficient time to hear each member’s opinion. By having several small groups work on the same topic at the same time, you can maximize the amount of individual input. You do, however, want the ideas generated within each sub-group shared with the members in the other sub-groups. To do this, certain members need to be designated as recorders, and they will represent each table.

As previously stated, each table is assigned the same topic to discuss. They should take 30-45 minutes to brainstorm on ideas to improve, change, update, etc. the challenge or chapter program. The facilitator needs to adjust the time based on how the groups are doing. It’s also critical for the facilitator to stop by each group and make sure that each is on task and to help “jump start” a group when it is struggling. After time is up, the recorder of each table moves to another table. He then shares the ideas generated by his table and learns those developed at the current table. The recorders from all the groups need to “ratchet” from group to group. At each new group the recorder visits, he is to *briefly* outline his group’s program(s). The new group is to give him feedback on what it likes and doesn’t like. When each recorder gets back to his original group (which has been listening to and commenting on all the other groups’ programs on the same topic while their recorders were away), he tells his group what the other groups liked and did

not like from its original plan. The facilitator should allow the groups an additional 15-20 minutes to revise their plans based on the feedback brought back by the recorder and the ideas picked up from the recorders of the other groups.

After doing so, each group is responsible for drawing up its proposed plan on a poster board. When finished, the facilitator should hang the finished posters where everyone can see them. You will find the results from all of the groups fairly consistent, because the programs have really been created by everyone.

Continue to do this with each topic.

If you only have time to get to one or two challenges due to time constraints, that's okay. It's better to have a couple of successes, instead of leaving the retreat with no specific plan for any one challenge.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Here is a sample of what a weekend retreat might look like. Obviously there can be thousands of variations to this agenda. The important thing is that you have an agenda and stick to it.

Friday

5:30 p.m.	Departure for retreat site
6:30	Arrival (set up/unpack/dinner prep)
7:00	Dinner
7:45-8:15	Orientation to retreat format, time schedule, and ground rules
8:30-10:30	Retreat Activities (See Section V)
10:30-	Free time (skits, movies, amateur hour, etc.)

Saturday

7:00 a.m.	Wake up calls
8:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:45	Rush workshop
11:00-noon	Rush planning session
Noon-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Review "Needs Assessment"
2:00-2:30	Brainstorm
2:30-2:45	Prioritize list of topics to be discussed
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-4:30	Ratchet system
4:30-4:45	Break
4:45-5:45	Ratchet system, cont'd
5:45-6:45	Establish goals and specific action plans
7:00-8:00	Dinner
8:00-9:00	Evaluation and summation of retreat
9:00	Candle pass

Sunday

9:00 a.m.	Depart for the chapter house
Noon-?	Officer Retreat

At the next chapter meeting, distribute copies of the goals and objectives to all the members of your chapter.

SECTION IV: GOAL SETTING

When a chapter wanders aimlessly through school semesters or years, it will most likely falter. It will have its peaks, but it will have its valleys too. Without goals, no one will know how to obtain or retain those peaks. Every chapter, from the biggest to the smallest, needs direction. That direction should come in the form of goals. In order for goals to be successful, they need to be established and supported by the entire chapter.

Consider the following principles of effective goal setting when planning and conducting the chapter's retreat:

1. What does the chapter want to accomplish?
2. Does the chapter believe it is possible to accomplish these goals?
3. Write the chapter's goals down on paper.
4. Determine how the chapter will benefit from achieving these goals.
5. Analyze the chapter's current position relative to achieving its specific goals.
6. Set deadlines for each goal.
7. Identify obstacles that stand in the chapter's way.
8. Identify the people and groups from whom the chapter needs help to achieve its goals.
9. Create a visual image of what the chapter wants to accomplish.
10. Back all plans with persistence and determination.

THE FOUR ACIDS TEST

After the entire goal list has been developed, the members should move toward consensus on the goals they believe to be the most important. Any goal must pass the "four acids test." Goals should be:

1. Time-oriented
2. Measurable
3. Worthwhile
4. Realistic

If a goal cannot pass every part of this test (i.e., the answer to *any* of the questions is "no"), then try to restate the goal so that it does (or form a new, related goal that will). The following example will illustrate the four acids test:

A chapter's rush goal is to "Pin as many good men as we can during the fall rush."

1. Is the goal time oriented? Yes (but a date can be added).
2. Is the goal measurable? No, how many is "many"?
3. Is it worthwhile? Since it isn't defined, it is hard to say whether it's worthwhile or not (although pinning good men is usually worthwhile).
4. Is it obtainable? Again, since it isn't defined, it's hard to say.

The danger of a goal that fails the four acids test is that the chapter never feels responsible for its own actions (or inactions). If it is not measurable, then the result is labeled "acceptable" after the fact. If it's not time-oriented, "We are not finished yet." If the goal is not obtainable, "No one could have done it." If the goal was not worthwhile, "It was a stupid idea from the beginning."

Restate the goal so that it can pass the four acid test, such as "Pin at least 15 men who meet our written criteria during the fall rush."

1. Is the goal time-oriented? Yes (during the fall semester)
2. Is the goal measurable? Yes (15 men)
3. Is the goal worthwhile? Yes (for our purposes)
4. Is the goal realistic? Yes (for our purposes)

The goal, "Pin at least 15 men who meet our written criteria during the fall rush," passes the four acids test.

Goal setting and objectives will give the chapter the direction it needs. From this point on, it is up to the chapter, both as a whole and as individual members, with the help of the officers, to see that the goals that were set are accomplished. **Section VI** of this **BRIEF** deals with following through with the results of the retreat. The new ideas generated will do absolutely no good if they are never acted upon. Goals should always be kept at the forefront of the chapter's awareness.

The *Committee System* **BRIEF** has more information about goal setting and Management By Objectives.

SECTION V: RETREAT ACTIVITIES

BROTHERHOOD BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The following are suggestions for activities that foster a deeper and healthier brotherhood experience in Delta Chi. These exercises are more advanced than the typical icebreakers. These activities, when taken seriously, will result in a friendlier, happier membership with a stronger commitment to each other and to Delta Chi.

INTERVIEWS

The group should be separated into pairs. Pairs should be composed of men who do not necessarily know each other very well. The purpose of the exercise is for the men to interview one another with the following questions:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your hometown?
3. How many people are in your family?
4. Do you have any extraordinary talents?
5. What is something about you that no one in the chapter knows?

Each man should take his turn interviewing the other, and then the group should reassemble and the men should introduce each other to the entire group.

BOUNDARY BREAKING

Boundary Breaking is an exercise that enables the brothers to really get to know each other. It is composed of a series of questions that get progressively more in-depth. The combination of light-hearted inquiries matched with more in-depth questions makes this exercise fun and revealing.

The membership should be broken up into small groups of six to eight men. The groups should spread out and group members should sit in circles. The retreat facilitator will explain the rules of the exercise to everyone and provide the discussion questions.

Everyone must respond to every question. Starting with a different person every question, responses should proceed in an orderly fashion until everyone in the group has spoken. If a person is at a loss for words, he can say "pass" and the discussion will come back to him when everyone else has responded. People should not be allowed to repeat anyone else's response. Choose a balance of light-hearted, medium and serious questions from the following list. Ask as many questions as time allows, and be sure to allow at least 15 minutes for debriefing time at the end. The entire exercise should last no more than an hour and a half.

Boundary Breaking sample questions:

Light-hearted questions

1. What is the title of the last book you read?
2. What is the best movie you have ever seen?
3. What is the ugliest thing you have ever seen?
4. What do you like to do most with a free hour?
5. If you could choose to be any animal other than man, what animal would you be?
6. If you could smash one thing and only one thing, what would it be?
7. What is the best book you have ever read?
8. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go first?
9. What is your favorite sport?
10. How many children do you want?
11. What word best describes advertising?
12. What advertisement bothers you the most?
13. What will you be doing ten years from today?
14. What is your greatest fear? Greatest embarrassment?
15. What is the greatest music ever composed?

Medium questions

1. Who is the most relevant person of our time?
2. What physical thing do you want to build more than anything else?
3. What is the most significant event of the last three months?
4. On what basis do you select your friends?
5. What is the most overwhelming thing you know?
6. What is the greatest problem in the United States?
7. What thing makes you feel most humble?
8. What is the greatest crime one person can commit against another?
9. For what do you think you would be willing to lay down your life?
10. What do you feel when you stand on the shore of an ocean?
11. If an atomic bomb were going to explode a block away in ten minutes, what would you do for those ten minutes?
12. What is your strongest emotion?
13. What one word would you put on your gravestone?
14. Choose a word that best describes your life up to this point.
15. What is your biggest worry?

Serious questions

1. What comes to mind when you first hear the word "reality"?
2. What is the most honest thing you have ever done?
3. What force of history are you most aware of as you plan your life?
4. What is the greatest value that guides your life?
5. If you were trying to recreate the sound of violence, what sound would you use?
6. What sound would you use for beauty?
7. What do you think of when you think of tragedy?
8. What person has influenced your life the most?
9. How would you symbolize a human soul (a rose, a sunset, a fountain, etc.)?
10. When do you sense being most alive?

When the small groups have completed discussing these questions, the group should proceed to a debriefing period. In order to decide how the participants are perceived, the debriefing is the most important part of the exercise and should not be overlooked. The following questions should be presented and answered in the same format as the previous list.

1. Which person was most honest in giving answers?
2. Which person did you learn the most about?
3. Which person do you want to know better?
4. Which person do you know the least about?
5. Which person do you think you could work with best for a long period of time?
6. Which person had the deepest insights?
7. Which person surprised you the most?
8. Which person likes people the most?
9. Which person is most sensitive to life?
10. Who is the best planner?
11. Who enjoys life the most?
12. Which answer do you want explained?
13. Who has the most "soul"?
14. Which person will be the best leader?
15. Which person has the most promise?
16. Which person do you feel is most like you?
17. Which person has the most charisma?

This brotherhood building activity is designed to remove the "masks" that people have a tendency to put on in the company of other people. By revealing the "real" person inside, it opens the door to healthier relationships and increased productivity. Many people may have the tendency to shy away from exposing their inner selves. In such cases, much effort should be placed on question selection. The retreat leader should also continuously encourage group members to take the activity seriously.

GOLD STAR

This exercise consists of total positive reinforcement. In small groups of six to eight, people sit in a circle. Everyone faces in except one person. This person will receive “gold stars.” As the person faces away from the circle, the rest of the group fires positive comments at the individual. Words such as “intelligent,” “friendly” and “musical” represent the type of comments necessary. Negative comments are not allowed. After 30 seconds, that person should face back into the circle (usually with a red face) and the next person should face out. The same process is exercised until everyone has received “gold stars.”

People will finish this activity feeling good about themselves, their brothers, and the entire chapter.

CANDLE PASS

One of the most popular brotherhood building activities in Delta Chi is the candle pass. This activity allows brothers an opportunity to express their positive attitudes about Delta Chi. Everyone attending sits in a large circle with the lights turned off. Each member takes a turn making positive comments about the chapter. A lit candle accompanies every “speech.” Only the person holding the candle is allowed to talk. The candle pass should never regress into a “gripe session” or a time to make basic announcements. It should be a positive experience, and comments should remain positive. When a person is finished with his comments, he concludes with “...proud to be a Delta Chi,” and the candle is passed on to the next person. When the candle makes a full circle, the last person speaking should blow it out and let the room sit dark and silent for a noticeable period of time. Turn the lights on; then circle up and sing the “Bond Song.”

TEAMS COURSE

The teams course is an excellent chance to build brotherhood, teamwork, and have a great time all at once. Following is a list of activities to use on the course.

Knots – Break up into groups of about ten members. Each group should form a circle, and each member should place his right hand into the middle, joining hands with one person across the circle. Each person then puts his left hand into the circle, joining with a different member (than he did with his right hand). Do not link hands with the person to the immediate left or right. It is important that no one make any rash moves at this point. The objective is for the members to figure a way out of the tangle. (There are three possible outcomes: a circle, two interlocking circles, or two circles with an overhand knot.) When the activity is completed, discuss the challenge of the activity. What was frustrating about it? Was everyone heard? Were there any good ideas lost? What did you learn from the activity? Was it a team effort or did one or two people take control? Then discuss how the exercise can relate to solving chapter challenges. (Time: 15 minutes)

Blind Polygon – The purpose of this exercise is to understand how ideas are initiated in a group, how difficult it is to get an idea out of a group, to challenge assertion skills, to question consensus-achieving abilities and to challenge individuals to apply standards to achievement. The team forms a circle and members put blindfolds on. The facilitator places a rope (six feet long, with ends tied together) in the middle of the circle and instructs the group to form a perfect square with each member holding onto the rope. No member can let go of the rope. When the group is satisfied with the task, have the members remove the blindfolds and see the result.

When you complete the activity, ask the team the following questions: Are you happy with the outcome? Did you really complete the task? How were ideas interjected into the group? Was everyone who had an idea heard? What does it take to be heard in the group? Was anyone’s idea rejected right off? How important was it for the group to reach consensus? Are you proud of the result? What would you do differently on your next attempt? (Time: 15 minutes)

People Platform – The objectives of this activity are to arrange everyone in a group on top of a platform so that no body parts are touching the ground, to encourage and empower others to lead, and to challenge participants to examine communication.

Arrange the activity as follows: first, since this activity is a challenge, make sure the platform appears to be too small for the entire group. The platform should be 2’x2’x1/2” thick plywood raised only two inches off the ground (a group of fifteen can arrange itself on a two foot by two foot platform). Mark off an area with tape (on the ground) about three feet from and around the platform, and tell the team members that it represents a “quicksand” pit. The rules for the activity are as follows: (1) all body parts must be off the ground (while on the platform), (2) the entire group must be off the ground for thirty seconds, (3) choose three individuals who will not have the use of their left arms, (4) choose three individuals who will not have the ability to talk, (5) if someone steps into the roped off “quicksand” area, everyone on the platform must get down and begin again, and (6) there is a five-minute limit.

When you have completed the exercise, ask the following questions: How was the exercise challenging? Was it difficult not being able to speak? How was communication without language difficult for the team? Did the loss of an arm change things? How? Did the time constraints affect proper execution? Why? (Time: 15 Minutes)

LESSON OF THE STRING

This activity will demonstrate what happens to the chapter if each member does not maintain his obligations to the fraternity. Arrange the members in a circle with one person holding a ball of string. The first person grasps the end of the ball of string and tosses it *across* the circle to another member. Make sure that each participant keeps his line taut. When everyone has a line, explain the importance of each person's contribution to the chapter, however small, and that they really do make a difference. At this point, ask members to begin slowly releasing their ends of the string. This action will demonstrate what happens to the chapter when everyone does not contribute. When the activity is completed, discuss the effect it had on each person and what he can do to ensure it will not happen to your chapter.

THE FLAG

Prior to the start of this activity, compile a list of areas about which the chapter needs to be concerned (areas which create challenges), such as a member's not paying bills, not attending rush events, not moving into the chapter house, etc. A facilitator (chosen because he is recognized as a person who cares a great deal about the chapter) should be selected prior to the event. Gather members and associates around a Delta Chi flag. Each person will hold a portion of the flag so that it is stretched strong and taut (symbolizing a strong chapter). The main speaker should first explain the "rule" of the activity—when you are tapped on your shoulder (by the main speaker) you immediately let go of the flag and step back three steps. He should then explain that the flag is at the whim of the wind; when the wind wants the flag to fly strong and taut, it will; when it wants the flag to fly weakly with ripples, the flag will. An analogy should then be drawn with the fraternity and its members (the chapter is like the flag; its members are like the wind).

Prior to the event, each area of chapter concern should be assigned to members who will be helping to hold the flag. Once the main speaker has finished his analogy, each previously selected member should *briefly* explain how his area of concern hurts the chapter (not more than one or two sentences should be said). When he is finished, the main speaker should go around and randomly tap flag holders. The number of men he taps is determined by the number of participants and the number of concerns you identified earlier: if there are 50 flag holders and 10 areas of concern, he should tap five people each time. The next flag holder will explain how his issue hurts the chapter. Once again, the main speaker taps flag holders. With each set of tappings, the flag will develop ripples and sags. Finally, there will only be two men holding the flag. The main speaker will tap one. The remaining man should be allowed to hold the flag alone for thirty seconds or so, and then he too should be tapped. As the flag falls to the floor, the main speaker should neatly fold the flag, lay it on the floor, and begin to slowly walk out of the room (as if deeply disappointed). Before he leaves, one of the previous flag holders (this person should be selected before the activity) should step forward, announcing, "This is not my fraternity," and pick up the flag. Everyone should join him in returning the flag to its original strong, taut state.

Each of these activities can be used to help your chapter build teamwork and reestablish your commitment to Delta Chi. Furthermore, they can be used as often as necessary with the members, associate members, and alumni.

The following are some techniques and exercises that will help you accomplish the objectives of the retreat. All of them are designed to get the members in attendance to think, react and respond to a structured situation.

ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing represents a useful technique for developing skills for dealing with people and illustrating challenges. It provides an arena in which examples of three types of roles (social, psychological and physical) can be played out in a contrived and relatively non-threatening setting.

Through the process of role-playing, an individual will also gain insight into himself and his behavior as he participates in situations according to his own needs and perceptions. He will begin to see and understand how he reacts in what may be unfamiliar settings and can gain actual experience in learning to see things and situations as others do. Observers also benefit from this activity.

The retreat facilitator should select one or two of the following structured situations. Individuals can be selected to participate and identify with particular characters and act out the roles spontaneously. When action stops, a discussion of the event should be centered on the problem that was presented and the behavior of each participant. You may then want to break the large group down into groups of eight men each. Each group should adjourn to a small room to consider solutions to the problem. The larger group is then reconvened and each eight-man group reports its findings.

Situation No. 1: Rush

Rush Chairman: The four men in your room are the youngest active members of your chapter. They are potentially strong rushers since they know the underclassmen well. You want to answer all their questions to the best of your ability and give them enthusiasm for the rushing process.

Brother No. 1: You are thoughtful, reflective. What you need is material on the fundamental arguments for joining a fraternity other than for social opportunities.

Brother No. 2: You are excited about fraternity life but fail to understand why living in the fraternity house is better than dorm living, and you know others will raise the same issue. Find out from the rush chairman.

Brother No. 3: You are willing to go out and recruit for the fraternity, but you are not particularly persuasive and have never sold anything in your life. Ask the rush chairman how to rush.

Brother No. 4: If this fraternity is as good as everyone says it is, and if the Greek system can afford to be selective, why go out and beat the bushes for people? Is all this rushing really needed?

Situation No. 2: The Chapter GPA

Scholastic Chairman: Your chapter average has not been too bad, but the associate member class seems to be having trouble academically. Somehow all the emphasis on social adeptness and fraternity spirit seems to have implied that the chapter is not interested in academic proficiency. You are talking to the associate member counselor and want to make detailed plans on how you can successfully attack this problem.

Associate Member Counselor: How many things can one guy teach at one time? Everybody gripes if the associate members aren't "gung-ho" for social events, aren't spending enough time around the house, aren't learning the fraternity songs, and aren't mastering the history! Sure, academic performance is important, but that's the university's problem, not yours. If you can be persuaded that it is part of the associate member education program, you'll cooperate; if not, then it's someone else's problem.

Situation No. 3: Drinking

Perpetually Drunk Brother: You drink almost every day, usually ending up fairly drunk and obnoxious. The other night you showed up at a party and were very drunk. You did two things that alienated everyone there. First, you went over to a sorority house and started shouting obscenities. Then about an hour later, you became ill in the front entryway.

Chapter "A": You are in a bind. You know that the active chapter is very angry with the drunk brother. Certain key brothers think this is the "last straw" with this brother, since he has already been warned several times to behave himself. Yet, you realize the guy has emotional problems that could really blow up if things aren't handled delicately. On the other hand, you have to protect your rights, the feelings of the brothers and the fraternity as well. You are undecided on how to handle this serious situation.

Fraternity Brother: You are a senior and are leading the brothers who are demanding that the brother be thrown out of the fraternity for his continued drunkenness and obnoxious behavior. You contend that he has been warned several times, each time promising to behave, and then in a month or so he is back to his old tricks again. You and many of the brothers are fed up with this childish and inconsiderate behavior and are demanding that he be expelled from the fraternity.

Situation No. 4: House Duties

House Manager: You are a forceful individual with strong concepts about the obligation of every member to pitch in and help the cause. Besides, the house corporation is now down on you for the state of the second floor halls and bathrooms. The problem is a pair of would-be rebels up there. They just won't do their house duties at the assigned times, if at all, on the grounds that they have more important things to do. You have just met them in the hall and are going to talk with them. You approached the executive committee last night, and they asked you to handle the situation in hopes that no official action would need to be taken. If you fail, they will take over and use force.

Two Non-Cleaners: The place is getting ridiculously regimented. Both of you are pacifists, and this ROTC-type house manager issues orders like a master sergeant, expecting everyone to jump. Well, you won't. It's one thing to cooperate, pitch in and do your part of the total maintenance job; that's certainly reasonable. It's quite another thing to have this loudmouth pushing everyone around at his discretion. You really have no choice but to resist him, on principle. If this organization is really for MEN, it's time the chapter started acting accordingly. You are disturbed and angry over this constant harping on something so unimportant.

Situation No. 5: Factions within the Chapter

Chapter "A": Meetings have been grueling lately, and bull sessions have been worse. The house is badly divided between factions representing different interests. The jocks, the party boys, the would-be scholars, the musicians, and the professional fraternity men are constantly belittling each other. You find a mixed group to discuss the situation, attempting to decipher what can be done to clear up this mess.

Four Other Members: Assign these roles among yourselves; it should be easy enough to assume a wishy-washy position in which you defend your preferences and accuse the others of not appreciating the contribution your friends make to the chapter. Each of you is defensive and easily agitated. One of you is a jock, the second the party boy, a third is serious about his studies and books and the fourth is extremely excited about being a fraternity member.

RECREATION

Recreation is a necessary element of any retreat. It allows people to relax and gain new perspectives on chapter programs and operations. In addition, recreational activities foster teamwork and friendly competition.

Recreation is **not** synonymous with alcohol. It is recommended that no alcohol be present during the retreat. The presence of alcohol will impair the productivity of the retreat. After a night of "boozing it up," brothers will probably show up late to morning meetings and, even upon arrival, will not be contributing 100%. If alcohol is included in the retreat, it must be in compliance with the FIPG Risk Management Policy and should be restricted to specific times. Definitely do not mix alcohol with the suggested recreational activities in this section.

Athletic Events: Some of the most common recreational activities for retreats fall under this heading. Football, softball, volleyball, swimming, and basketball are easily organized and require little equipment. Team sports are the best for retreats since they encourage involvement by all attending. Be sure to mix up teams regularly.

Games: "Capture the Flag" is a popular recreational activity for retreats. This game includes dividing the group into two teams. Avoid separating the teams by associate member class or members against associates. It's best to have evenly represented teams. The game is played outside where both teams hide a team flag. If playing at night, the flag should cover a flashlight so that it is detectable. The object of the game is to capture or locate the other team's flag without being captured by members of the opposing team. When captured, a person is brought to a prison where his teammates can rescue him if they tag the prisoner before they are tagged by a prison guard. The first team to capture the opponent's flag or capture all the opposing team's members wins.

Advanced Recreation: More and more retreats are being accompanied by exceptional recreational activities that stretch the abilities of members and leaves them with great feelings of accomplishment. Some of these activities include rock climbing and rappelling, river rafting, rope courses, and parachuting. These activities require much more planning and time. **All also require professional supervision and guidance. None of these suggestions should be attempted without appropriately certified professional supervision.**

For more brotherhood ideas, refer to the *Pre-Initiation BRIEF*.

SECTION VI: FOLLOW-THROUGH

As the retreat draws to a close, have the members fill out a sample retreat evaluation (see **Appendix B**). This will help in planning the next retreat.

For a little while after the retreat, the membership should feel good about what it has accomplished. Men will return to their chapter house, residence halls and apartments with renewed feelings of enthusiasm. Retreats are a breath of fresh air for the membership. The result is motivation, a positive mental attitude and a strong desire to improve the character of the chapter.

But, what is character? Character is the ability to carry out a worthy decision after the emotion of making that decision has passed. The chapter has figured out what it needs to do to improve its programming. It has come up with a plan to achieve that improvement. Now it is time for action.

Fewer things are more frustrating than creating great ideas and then not acting on those ideas. The sense of accomplishment felt by the membership will quickly deteriorate if the chapter leadership fails to allow the chapter to act on the ideas and programs designed during the retreat.

The executive committee should be the most excited members of the group. The membership has taken an active role in designing programs that will make the chapter a more formidable force on campus. Now all that is required is for the officers to do what they were elected to do: lead.

Monitoring committee programs, making sure individuals are doing their jobs, and seeing that program objectives are being met are just a few of the responsibilities of the executive committee. In addition to the fundamental organizational management, the officers are responsible for communicating progress, or lack thereof, to the membership. Constantly informing the group of goal and objective achievement will extend feelings of accomplishment achieved in the retreat. Communication is the most important element of follow-through.

THE FOUR P's

The idea of follow-through is to make the group accountable, and the way to do that is through communication. A proven means of keeping the membership informed is through the application of the Four P's: Publish, Publicize, Praise and Promote.

Publish: A well-written narrative illustrating chapter goals should be sent to all members, alumni, fraternity advisors and the International Headquarters. When goals and objectives are made public in this manner, there is usually a higher achievement rate. The alumni newsletter is a great place to do this.

Publicize: Make an appealing poster with chapter goals and objectives on it. Hang it in a location for everyone to see. Don't forget to include important dates and key individuals. You may make a large calendar listing goals and objective dates. As each goal or objective is reached, mark it off and make a special note of it at dinner or at the next chapter meeting. The rule for posters and such is "the more the merrier."

Praise: Don't forget to give credit where credit is due. Publicly acknowledge individuals who are instrumental in helping the chapter reach its goals and objectives. Install a "Brother of the Week" award or hand out certificates of appreciation. Remember to publicly praise and congratulate the group for a "job-well-done."

Promote: The chapter will often need to be reminded of the goals and objectives established during the retreat. The executive officers are responsible for constantly providing the focus of the group. This will help the chapter stay on course. Continuously promoting goals and objectives provides the direction necessary for making progress. When performance knows it will be evaluated, performance improves.

THE NEED TO BELIEVE

Finally, the executive officers must help the membership accept the fact that the goals are achievable. They must work to eliminate the self-imposed constraints and help the membership realize its full potential. Too often, our perception of what is possible limits the goals we set. Our ability to achieve is thereby limited by what we believe to be possible. We are often moved by what we wish to get rid of instead of by that which we wish to achieve. We walk into the future looking at the past, concentrating on problems instead of goals. That is not the formula for success.

Encourage the chapter to move toward its goals rather than away from its problems. Talk about where the chapter is going, not where it has been. Sell the future and put the past behind you.

SECTION VII: OFFICER RETREATS

A chapter retreat sets *chapter* goals; an officer retreat provides the executive committee the opportunity to determine how it can best facilitate the chapter's efforts to achieve these goals. It will also serve as a step in the formal training of the new officers.

Bear in mind, the purpose of this retreat is not to set the direction for the chapter. That's done by the members at the chapter retreat. Instead, the purpose is to develop strategies to ensure the chapter's goals are reached. Therefore, officer retreats should be scheduled immediately (*not* the same day) after the chapter retreat.

It should be decided who will do what and how. Tasks should be delegated to the appropriate officers and committee chairmen, and specific deadlines and action plans should be developed for each to ensure their completion.

Specific goals (don't forget the Four Acids Test) should be developed for each officer. For example, the "A" may set a goal that he will contact the "BB" at least weekly to discuss chapter issues. Notice that this is not a goal for the entire chapter; it's a personal goal. It would be inappropriate for the "A" to establish a goal that the chapter will win the all-sports trophy. He is incapable of doing so on his own. That would be a goal for the entire chapter to adopt.

As during a chapter retreat, other topics for discussion can be developed by brainstorming.

An officer retreat can also be an important link in the officer training program, as this provides a formal forum for training. The "BB", ABT and house corporation members, along with any other important advisors, should be invited to participate in this program.

A sample officer training/transition program is detailed in the *Chapter Management BRIEF*. Plug this retreat anywhere in the process as it meets your needs.

SECTION VIII: HOW TO REDUCE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

- A. **Be Prompt:** Announce an impending change as quickly as possible. Don't give the rumor mill a chance to grind out stories that aren't true but are hard to deny.
- B. **Explain the Reasons:** Tell members why the change is important and how it affects them. Will it help the organization prosper and the members, too? If you distort the reasons, members will be doubly antagonistic when they learn the truth.
- C. **Explain what the Changes Mean to the Individual:** Try to let each member know how the change will affect him. Explain the benefits, and pledge to protect your people against losses.
- D. **Ask for Advice:** Many experts overlook the good first-hand experience they can get from people who do the jobs. Your members can often point out the real pitfalls in a plan that looks perfect on paper.
- E. **Invite Participation:** People tend to support that which they help create.
- F. **Don't Change for the Sake of Change:** Some leaders try to prove their own worth by making frequent shake-ups in routines. Members know this and resist every change, even the worthwhile ones.
- G. **Avoid Trivial Changes:** It might be handier to move a file cabinet, but if it causes a fight, why bother? Save your changes for more important issues.
- H. **Avoid Surprises:** Lay the groundwork carefully; discuss the problems caused by the old method and then suggest, "Let's try it this way and see how it works."
- I. **Be Careful of Status:** Every group has status symbols that are zealously sought and jealously guarded. Don't let a change build one member's status at the expense of another's.
- J. **Keep out of Ruts:** A good way to pave the way for progress is to have members alternate duties as much as possible. A planned program of job movement will keep people from becoming firmly entrenched in private little procedures. It cuts down on boredom and makes your work force more flexible.
- K. **Avoid Chain Reactions:** Don't unsettle your members by springing a bunch of changes, one after another. Try to space them out or make one big change.
- L. **Sweeten One Change with Another:** If you have to make a change that is going to be unpopular, try adding some benefits to make it more agreeable.
- M. **Don't Accuse Members of Resisting Change:** It may be true, but most people don't realize it or won't admit it. You will only force them to try all the harder to prove that a new method won't work.
- N. **Allow Plenty of Time:** Don't expect any new procedure, idea, equipment or layout to be an instant success. It takes a while for people to adjust.
- O. **Watch out for "Red Flags":** Hard core resistance should tell you that something is wrong. When you face it, don't try to bulldoze the change through. Find out first why people don't like the change, and work from that point to soothe their fears or even to give a second thought to the proposed change.
- P. **Don't be Afraid to Say, "Forget It":** If a change really isn't any good, and some of them aren't, why not call the whole thing off?
- Q. **Remember, there are Three Ways to Deal with Conflict:**
1. **Solution** - involves accepting the conditions that produce the conflict and trying to get whatever you want at the cost of the opponent. This often creates conditions that breed future and more intense conflict.

2. **Resolution** - involves accepting the conditions that produce the conflict while trying to reach a compromise acceptable to both sides. This may stabilize the conflict, but it seldom does away with it, since each side is denied something it deserves.
3. **Dissolution** - involves changing the conditions that produce the conflict and thus eliminating the conflict. For example, your chapter has only enough money to either hold a big party or redecorate the living room. Instead of trying to change those who disagree with your choice, hold a fund-raiser and do both.

Procedure For Handling Conflict

- A. Acknowledge the conflict or resistance without judging the other party.
 1. State how you feel and think and what you observe behaviorally about the disagreement.
 2. Avoid blaming the other person for his response. He is entitled to it.
 3. Ask the other party how he feels, thinks, etc.
- B. Determine if both of you want to resolve the conflict in a way that supports the other's goals and self-respect.
 1. Ask if each wants to deal in mutual self-respect, believing that a fair solution can be found.
 2. This sets up a productive tension with the current, unpleasant state between you.
- C. Propose this procedure to the other person, and begin to consciously facilitate it yourself.
 1. A mutually agreed upon method can be followed collaboratively. As well as speeding a common solution, it will focus you more quickly on joint resolution.
 2. Teaching the other members about conflict resolution may result in your not repeating the same disagreement again.
- D. Share your perceptions about the conflict situation in honest detail.
 1. Encourage an honest airing of all perceptions, positive and negative. Seek to get them all out in front of both parties.
 2. Avoid arguing with the other's perceptions. Seek only to clarify, listen to, and understand them. You cannot argue the other party from his view of reality. Summarize his perceptions when he is finished to be sure you have heard them.
- E. Reality test areas of disagreement or bad feelings that still exist. Explain and note objectively with each other where the problems still lie, by testing the validity and fairness of the other person's perceptions. Note areas of disagreement on interactive and technical levels.
- F. Ask in good faith where each of you will compromise to maintain the other person's self-respect and goals. Note what each person wants from the other on interactive as well as technical levels. **Seek compromise.** You are bound by the other person to continued hassling, unless you try to find common ground.
 1. Make commitments to each other that can be measured and re-visited.
 2. Do not end your discussions until each is satisfied and supportive of the agreement.

APPENDIX A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. What are your hobbies/leisure time activities?

2. What kinds of parties/social activities do you like best?

3. What sports do you enjoy participating in?

4. What sports do you enjoy as a spectator?

5. What are some subject areas/topics of discussion that you find interesting? (You may or may not already know much about them.)

6. What kinds of cultural activities do you enjoy, either as a participant or a spectator?

7. What are your major academic concerns?

8. What are several major personal hassles you've had in the past two to three years?

**APPENDIX B:
RETREAT EVALUATION**

1. What activities of the retreat did you find most worthwhile?

Why?

2. What activities of the retreat did you find least worthwhile?

Why?

3. What was the most important thing you learned at the retreat?

4. What topic would you have liked to have spent more time on?

5. Please comment on how the retreat could have been improved.

6. Was the retreat site adequate? yes no Why or why not?

7. Do you feel adequately prepared for the many aspects of rush as a result of the retreat?

Why or why not?

8. Please rate the retreat overall and add comments or suggestions. (Circle only one number)

Poor										Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Comments: